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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2008

#### In Today's Papers

PM Erdogan Urges AKP Members for Restraint Regarding Closure Case  
Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Hurriyet, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others:  
Speaking at an AKP Parliamentary group meeting, PM Erdogan said,  
"This closure case could strengthen the Turkish judicial system's  
power. However, we will continue to work toward a constitutional  
amendment that will make party closures more difficult. The closure  
case opened against the AKP aims to weaken the role political  
representation. Such actions will not only harm the people but will  
hurt the state." PM Erdogan urged his party members to remain calm.  
Meanwhile, the AKP Central Executive Board convened yesterday and  
tasked Deputy PM Cemil Cicek to prepare the AKP's defense.

#### EU Response to AKP Closure Case

As expected, nationalist media outlets are unconcerned with EU  
warnings surrounding the closure case, while mainstream, liberal,  
and Islamist pro-government papers are increasingly concerned by the  
EU criticisms. Islamist-oriented Zaman writes in, "If the AKP is  
Closed, Accession Talks Must Be Propped Up," that "EU members told  
Zaman they view the closure case as an attack on democracy."  
Mainstream Hurriyet writes, "European Commission President Jose  
Manuel Durao Barros and EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn will  
visit Turkey from April 10-12 in order to meet the president, prime  
minister, opposition leaders, and non-governmental organizations."  
Hurriyet expects Barros and Rehn will "support the reform process  
and call for advancing Turkey's bid to the EU." Zaman calls the  
visit "a critical summit," and notes the visit is very timely.  
Mainstream Milliyet reports the Turkey-EU Joint parliamentary  
commission Chairman Joost Lagendijk express concern that, "Turkey  
may waste another year in its bid for the EU," and that "Europe may  
abandon Turkey unless the AKP passes new reforms," but that "the  
suit against the AKP is no surprise." However, Milliyet notes he  
pointed out, "The AKP closure case will please those who oppose  
Turkey's EU bid." Mainstream Sabah carries Foreign Minister Ali  
Babacan comments, "Turkey has passed tests of its democracy in the  
past, and will continue efforts towards EU negotiations."  
Meanwhile, Sabah also carries the comments of EU Parliament's

reporter Oomen Ruijten that, "Turkey must reform its judiciary to be in line with EU standards." Meanwhile, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes, "the EU is in love with the AKP," and "EU accession has become hopeless." However, the unsigned column points out, "the Republic of Turkey was founded despite plans by Europe to divide up Anatolia," and "we must get over this EU mentality."

#### Editorial Commentary on AKP Closure Case

In mainstream Vatan, Zulfu Livaneli wrote (4/2): "The key to unlocking the current impasse must include a process of becoming fully secularist and fully democratic. The secularists have a major test in front of them. The pioneers of secularist groups could deepen the crisis by advocating for isolationist, and possibly even racist, nationalist rhetoric. Or, they can save Turkey from its impending crisis by fully embracing democracy, freedoms and reforms.

Any secularist with common sense should think of carrying Turkey to a level that reflects fully democratic and global values, especially at a time when Turkey has 744 open cases related to freedom of expression (i.e. Article 301 investigations) and the middle class is fading away due to the ailing economy. The remedy to this crisis also includes a cessation to calling religious groups 'reformist' and secularist groups 'nationalist.'"

Mainstream Milliyet carried an op-ed piece by its editorial board (4/2): "The common sense that will end this crisis is a broader consensus between the ruling AKP and the main opposition parties, CHP and MHP. The decision-makers should be able to reach a compromise on finding a rational framework in order to avoid the highly risky consequences of uncertainties. In that regard, there is general consensus in every level of society that political party closures are wrong. This consensus can be used as a key to reach a

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solution. At the same time, the ruling party should take steps toward eliminating worries about secularism. That will be one of the major steps toward a broader consensus. The Turkish political system must demonstrate maturity and overcome this crisis within a democratic framework."

Nationalist-leftist Cumhuriyet carried an op-ed piece by its editorial board (4/2): "The statements from EU officials on the AKP closure case present a pathetic picture. The EU seems to be ignorant of history and geography; they make irresponsible statements based on their own personal political interests. It is odd to see such an approach from Europe as the West, including both the US and Europe, consider taking measures against the rise of Islamic movements. The Republic of Turkey was founded despite plans by Europe to divide up Anatolia. It must be kept in mind that the Republic of Turkey was founded based on contemporary values after defeating such mentality. We must get over this EU mentality."

#### Al-Qaeda Operations in Istanbul

Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Cumhuriyet: In simultaneous operations in five different districts of Istanbul yesterday, around 300 policemen raided several houses and arrested 45 suspected Al-Qaeda members, including Al-Qaeda's Turkey leader Halis Bayanci. Security officials said that the terrorist organization was preparing assassinations and revenge attacks for the Gaziantep raid against Al-Qaeda earlier this year.

#### Spring Operations Continue Against the PKK

Mainstream Sabah reports that security operations continue in Bestler-Dereleler, Cudi and Gabar regions with the participation of around 5,000 Turkish troops. During the clashes yesterday, nine PKK members were killed. Meanwhile, Turkish General Staff announced on its web site that 393 terrorists were rendered ineffective, i.e. killed, during the last three months.

#### Turkey Changes Lobbyists in the U.S.

Sabah, Hurriyet, Yeni Safak: Papers report that Turkey cancelled its lobbying contract with Republican Bob Livingstone. Instead, Turkey signed a new contract with the "DLA Piper" group. Republican Dick Arme and Democrat Richard Gephardt are the advisors of this group. Sabah reports that Turkey spends \$2,000,000 annually on lobbying issues in the US.

#### Satterfield Interview by Star TV

On April 2, liberal Radikal carried excerpts from Star TV primetime news interview under the headline, "The U.S. Awaits Social Steps against the PKK." Radikal notes Satterfield said the U.S., "wants to see social and economic steps taken against the PKK." Satterfield also said, "The timing of Turkey's cross border operation, including the decisions to begin and to end it, were decisions taken by the Turkish military and the Turkish government. I would like to clarify that we were not informed about operation at any point. We support Turkey's right for self defense. The Turkish and American governments agree on the need for comprehensive approach in order to end PKK terror. The Turkish government, the military, and TGS have announced the need for a comprehensive solution. And we would like to see more social and economic steps in addition to military steps. These steps are necessary to take if there is a desire to resolve the problem."

On April 1, under the headline "A Call for Talks with the Kurds," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reported the U.S. special Iraq envoy Ambassador David Satterfield briefed Turkish journalists on Monday after his meetings in Baghdad and Ankara. According to Cumhuriyet, Satterfield said, "Turkey and the U.S. have a common goal of a secure and stable Iraq. Iran's expansionist goals, Sunni Islamist terror and Al-Qaeda threaten the Middle East." The U.S. envoy noted the PKK threat was also directed toward the Kurds and non-Kurds in Iraq. Satterfield said he and his Turkish counterpart Murat Ozcelik have exchanged views on the elimination of the threat on Iraq. "We

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want to work together with the Iraqi and Turkish governments as well as with the Kurdish regional administration," stated Satterfield. He reiterated the U.S. sees the PKK as a terror organization, and stressed that the necessary steps should be taken for militants to defect from the organization. "We appreciate the steps taken by the Kurdish administration, but they need to do more. Turkey has to establish contact with the Kurdish administration; we believe direct contacts are important. The Kurdish administration, of course, must state that the PKK is a terror organization," he emphasized.

TV News:  
NTV

#### Domestic News

- Ramazan Dal, a demonstrator injured during March 22 Nevruz celebrations in the eastern city of Van, has died from his injuries.

- Labor unions, NGOs and vocational organizations protested the AKP government's new social security bill in several cities across Turkey including Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Adana yesterday.

- The Italian Embassy in Turkey hailed the victory of Milan in the bid for hosting Expo 2015, but at the same has expressed its respect for Milan's "prestigious rival" Izmir.

#### International News

- Outgoing Russian President Vladimir Putin may move to the prime minister's office on May 8, the day his successor Dmitry Medvedev assumes his post as president.

- At the request of Secretary Rice, Israel will transfer control of the border crossings between the Gaza Strip and Israel to Palestinian representatives.

- U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, "President Bush should consider boycotting the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics Games in order to protest China's human rights record."

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